

PART 2

CCDF SUBSIDY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

2.1 Administration of the Program

The Lead Agency has broad authority to administer (i.e., establish rules) and operate (i.e., implement activities) the CCDF program through other governmental, non-governmental, or other public or private local agencies as long as it retains overall responsibility for the administration of the program. (658D(b), §98.11(a))

2.1.1. Which of the following CCDF program rules and policies are set or established at the State/Territory versus the local level? Identify the level at which the following CCDF program rules and policies are established.

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- Eligibility rules and policies (e.g., income limits) are set by the:
 - State/Territory
 - Local entity.

If checked, identify the type of policies the local entity(ies) can set

- Other.
Describe:

- Sliding fee scale is set by the:
 - State/Territory
 - Local entity.

If checked, identify the type of policies the local entity(ies) can set

- Other.
Describe:

- Payment rates are set by the:
 - State/Territory
 - Local entity.

If checked, identify the type of policies the local entity(ies) can set

Other.

Describe:

2.1.2. How is the CCDF program operated in your State/Territory? In the table below, identify which agency(ies) performs these CCDF services and activities.

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Implementation of CCDF Services/Activities

Who determines eligibility?

Note: If different for families receiving TANF benefits and families not receiving TANF benefits, please describe:

Agency (Check all that apply)

- CCDF Lead Agency
- TANF agency
- Other State/Territory agency.

Describe:

- Local government agencies such as county welfare or social services departments
- Child care resource and referral agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Other.

Describe:

Who assists parents in locating child care (consumer education)?

Agency (Check all that apply)

- CCDF Lead Agency
- TANF agency
- Other State/Territory agency.

Describe:

- Local government agencies such as county welfare or social services departments
- Child care resource and referral agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Other.

Describe:

Who issues payments?

Agency (Check all that apply)

- CCDF Lead Agency
- TANF agency
- Other State/Territory agency.

Describe:

- Local government agencies such as county welfare or social services departments
- Child care resource and referral agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Other.

Describe:

Describe to whom is the payment issued (e.g., parent or provider) and how are payments distributed (e.g., electronically, cash, etc)

Payments are issued directly to the provider. Payments are the balance of the caregiver's rate (up to the assessed market rate or private fee, whichever is lower), minus the assessed parent fee.

Payments are made in check or electronically, at the request of the provider.

Other. List and describe:

2.2. Family Outreach and Application Process

Lead Agencies must inform parents of eligible children and the general public of the process by which they can apply for and potentially receive child care services. (658D(b)(1)(A), 658E(c)(2)(D) & (3)(B), §§98.16(k), 98.30(a)-(e). **Note** - For any information in questions 2.2.1 through 2.2.10 that differs or will differ for families receiving TANF, please describe in 2.2.11.

2.2.1. By whom and how are parents informed of the availability of child care assistance services under CCDF? (658E(c)(2)(A), §98.30(a)) Check all agencies and strategies that will be used in your State/Territory.

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- CCDF Lead Agency
- TANF offices
- Other government offices
- Child care resource and referral agencies
- Contractors

- Community-based organizations
- Public schools
- Internet

(provide website): <http://www.childcarechoices.me/ccchoices/home.aspx>

- Promotional materials
- Community outreach meetings, workshops or other in-person meetings
- Radio and/or television
- Print media
- Other.

Describe:

2.2.2. How can parents apply for CCDF services? Check all application methods that your State/Territory has chosen to implement.

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- In person interview or orientation
- By mail
- By Phone/Fax
- Through the Internet

(provide website): <https://www1.maine.gov/benefits/account/login.html>

- By Email
- Through a State/Territory Agency
- Through an organization contracted by the State/Territory
- Other.

Describe:

2.2.3. Describe how the Lead Agency provides consumer education to parents applying for CCDF assistance to promote informed choices about the quality of care provided by various providers in their communities.

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Lead Agencies must certify that the State/Territory will collect and disseminate to parents of eligible children and the general public, consumer education information that will promote informed child care choices (658E (c)(2)(G), §98.33).

For example, memorandums of understanding with resource and referral agencies to provide consumer education to families applying for CCDF assistance, providing parents with provider lists showing licensing history and/or Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) ratings, or informational brochures that address importance of quality and different care options available.

Parents are referred to the Child Care Resource and Referral Specialist to be given information and support to find the child care that best suits their family needs. The information provided at that time includes information on the Quality for ME, Maine's Quality Rating and Improvement System and quality measures for child care. Additionally, the State of Maine utilizes a website designed for families. This site includes parent resources in addition to a child care search tool. This site can be navigated at <http://www.childcarechoices.me/ccchoices/home.aspx>

Families are able to request information from the Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services if there have been any substantiated reports made against a provider, as this information is a matter of public record.

Brochures and pamphlets are available at the Lead Agency and all collaborative partner sites regarding quality child care and Quality for ME, Maine's Quality Rating and Improvement System in order for all consumers of child care to be informed of the importance of quality child care.

In order for licensed providers to receive Child Care Development Funds through subsidy payments, they must be deemed eligible and sign a provider agreement which indicates they will participate in Quality for ME, Maine's Quality Rating and Improvement System.

2.2.4. Describe how the Lead Agency will support child care programs to increase the likelihood that CCDF-served children receive higher quality care as defined in your State/Territory.

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For example, methods used to promote upward movement in quality rating and improvement system, methods used to encourage high quality programs to participate in the subsidy program such as tiered reimbursement, or incentives used to support high quality programs in rural, suburban, urban, and low-income communities.

Maine has implemented a building block Quality Rating and Improvement System, Quality for ME with four steps of quality. Any provider that is enrolled in our system has access to low cost or no cost training, have access to technical assistance providers and are eligible for scholarships. By providing care to children receiving CCDF subsidy, providers who are at Step 2-4 in Quality for ME may be eligible to receive quality differentials of 2%, 5% or 10%.

2.2.5. Describe how the Lead Agency promotes access to the CCDF subsidy program? Check the strategies that will be implemented by your State/Territory.

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Provide access to program office/workers such as by:

Providing extended office hours

Accepting applications at multiple office locations

Providing a toll-free number for clients

Email/online communication

Other.

Describe:

Using a simplified eligibility determination process such as:

Simplifying the application form (such as eliminating unnecessary questions, lowering the reading level)

Developing a single application for multiple programs

Developing web-based and/or phone-based application procedures

Coordinating eligibility policies across programs.

List the program names: [Child Care Subsidy](#), [MaineCare](#), [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#), [Transitional Child Care \(through TANF\)](#)

Streamlining verification procedures, such as linking to other program data systems

Providing information multi-lingually

Including temporary periods of unemployment in eligibility criteria for new applicants (job search, seasonal unemployment).

Length of time:

(Note: this period of unemployment should be included in the Lead Agency's definition of working, or job training/educational program at 2.3.3).

Other.

Describe:

3.05 Parents on Maternity/Paternity Leave

3.05.1 The eligibility for Child Care Subsidy services will continue for up to twelve (12) weeks for a child of a Parent on maternity or paternity leave. The subsidy will be reinstated at the end of maternity leave when the parent returns to work and the child returns to child care.

3.05.2 DHHS will pay for no more than two (2) weeks of care for a child who is absent from child care during the Parent's maternity or paternity leave. If the child who has been receiving subsidy attends child care while the Parent is on maternity or paternity leave, the provider shall be paid for the hours of care the child receives based on the original Award Letter.

4.03 Activity: Job Search for Active Recipients.

Interim child care may be provided for **up to** two (2) months for current recipients who have lost work who have completed school and are looking for work. Parents, who contact the Department or the **Contracted Slots Agency**, complete a Job Search Request form and request job search time shall be granted:

- a. One job search per six (6) month period.

b. Job search time is limited to 20 hours per week.

4.07 Seasonal Employment

Parents whose employment status has changed because of seasonal employment or a planned lay-off shall not be required to re-apply for their child care voucher when they return to work, if the following action

and criteria are met:

a. The Parent must provide the Department or **the contracted agency** a written notice two (2) weeks prior to the end of seasonal employment or the planned lay off.

- b. The written notice must include a statement from the Parent's employer stating the date employment will commence again, the number of hours to be worked, and the hourly rate of pay.
- c. The starting date of employment may not exceed sixty (60) days from the last date of employment.

Other.
Describe:

None

2.2.6. Describe the Lead Agencies policies to promote continuity of care for children and stability for families. Check the strategies, if any, that your State/Territory has chosen to implement.

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Provide CCDF assistance during periods of job search.

Length of time: Interim child care may be provided for up to two (2) months for current recipients who have lost work or who have completed school and are looking for work. Parents, who contact the Department, complete a Job Search Request form and request job search time shall be granted.

Establish two-tiered income eligibility to allow families to continue to receive child care subsidies if they experience an increase in income but still remain below 85% of State median income (SMI)

Synchronize review date across programs
List programs:

Child Care Subsidy review date aligns with all other state or federal public benefits a family may be receiving.

Longer eligibility re-determination periods (e.g., 1 year).
Describe:

One Year

Extend periods of eligibility for families who are also enrolled in either Early Head Start or Head Start and pre-k programs.

Describe:

Extend periods of eligibility for school-age children under age 13 to cover the school year.

Describe:

Minimize reporting requirements for changes in family's circumstances that do not impact families' eligibility, such as changes in income below a certain threshold or change in employment

Individualized case management to help families find and keep stable child care arrangements.

Describe:

Using non-CCDF Funds to continue subsidy for families who no longer meet eligibility, such as for children who turn 13 years of age during the middle of a program year

Other.

Describe:

None

2.2.7. How will the Lead Agency provide outreach and services to eligible families with limited English proficiency? Check the strategies, if any, that your State/Territory has chosen to implement.

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Application in other languages (application document, brochures, provider notices)

Informational materials in non-English languages

Training and technical assistance in non-English languages

Website in non-English languages

Lead Agency accepts applications at local community-based locations

Bilingual caseworkers or translators available

Outreach Worker

Other.

Describe:

None

If the Lead Agency checked any option above related to providing information or services in other non-English languages, please list the languages offered :

Maine State Government offers language interpretation services to any and all non English speaking persons. The most common requests for translation services as it relates to Child Care Services are Spanish and Arabic.

2.2.8. How will the Lead Agency overcome language barriers with providers? Check the strategies, if any, that your State/Territory has chosen to implement.

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- Informational materials in non-English languages
- Training and technical assistance in non-English languages
- CCDF health and safety requirements in non-English languages
- Provider contracts or agreements in non-English languages
- Website in non-English languages
- Bilingual caseworkers or translators available
- Collect information to evaluate on-going need, recruit, or train a culturally or linguistically diverse workforce
- Other.

Maine State Government offers language interpretation services to any and all non English speaking persons. The most common requests for translation services as it relates to Child Care Services are Spanish and Arabic.

None

If the Lead Agency checked any option above related to providing information or services in other non-English languages, please list the languages offered:

Maine State Government offers language interpretation services to any and all non English speaking persons. The most common requests for translation services as it relates to Child Care Services are Spanish and Arabic.

2.2.9. Describe how the Lead Agency documents and verifies applicant information using the table below. (§98.20(a))

Check the strategies that will be implemented by your State/Territory. **Attach** a copy of your parent application for the child care subsidy program(s) as **Attachment 2.2.9** or provide a web address, if available:

The Lead Agency requires documentation of:	Describe how the Lead Agency documents and verifies applicant information:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applicant identity	<p>Proof of identity is required and shall be established by showing a valid photo ID. If applicants do not have proof of identity, they shall be given ten (10) days to provide it.</p> <p>5.02.1 Acceptable Forms of Proof of Identity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. An original, valid, current Maine driver's license, permit, or ID card, with photograph; b. An original, valid, current, unexpired Certificate of U. S. Citizenship (INS Form N-560) with photograph; c. An original, valid, current, unexpired Certificate of Naturalization (INS Form 550 or INS Form 570) with photograph; d. An original, valid, current, unexpired U. S. Military ID Card; e. U. S. Military Retiree Card or Uniform Service Identification Privilege Card (DD 1173) with current photograph; f. An original, valid, current, unexpired or legally extended United States passport with current photograph.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Household composition	<p>See program application- parent self-report and self-certify</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applicant's relationship to the child	<p>See program application- parent self-report and self-certify</p>

Child's information for determining eligibility (e.g., identity, age, etc.)

Ages of Children

In order to be eligible for Child Care Subsidy, children must be at least 6 weeks of age and not reached their 13th birthday.

Children with special needs who have not reached their 19th birthday may be served if they are physically or mentally incapable of caring for themselves as diagnosed by a qualified professional or court ordered.

A Child Care Subsidy award may be issued for children less than 6 weeks of age who have approval by the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services to be cared for in a Child Care Facility or a Family Child Care.

Age is reported on the application by the applicant, it is self-reported. Most often it is confirmed through birth certificate used to verify citizenship.

5.01 Child's Citizenship Requirement

The child must be a U. S. citizen or a 'qualified alien' as defined by the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC §§ 1101 et seq. Only the citizenship and immigration status of the child, who is the primary beneficiary of the child care benefit, is relevant for eligibility purposes. Applicants who cannot provide verification of citizenship of children receiving Child Care Services are not eligible for subsidy.

5.01.1 A U.S. Citizen is either:

- a. A person born in the territory of the United States; OR
- b. An individual born of a parent who is a U.S. citizen or who otherwise qualifies for U.S. citizenship under §301 et seq. of the Immigration and Nationality Act; [8 U.S.C. §§ 1401-1409], OR
- c. A person who has undergone naturalization. Naturalization is the process by which a citizen of a foreign country becomes a United States citizen, OR
- d. A national (both citizen and non-citizen national)
 1. Citizen National. A citizen national is an individual who otherwise qualified as a U.S. citizen under §301 et seq. of the Immigration and Nationality Act [8 U.S.C. §§ 1401-1409]
 2. Non-Citizen National. A non-citizen national an individual of the United States, including American Samoa and Swain's Island, to a parent who is a non-citizen national.

5.01.2 As defined by the Immigration and Naturalization Act, a qualified alien is:

- a. Lawfully admitted for permanent residence
- b. Granted asylum
- c. A refugee admitted to the United States
- d. An alien paroled into the United States for a period of at least one year
- e. An alien whose deportation or removal is being withheld
- f. An alien granted conditional entry
- g. An alien who is a Cuban Haitian entrant under the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980
- h. An alien who (or whose child or Parent) has

been battered or subjected to extreme the U. S.

5.01.3 Acceptable Proofs of Citizenship: Citizenship can be verified by submission of any document that proves a U.S. place of birth or documents showing that the person is a U.S. citizen. All documents must be either an original or a copy certified by the issuing agency. Verification of citizenship is required only once, unless later evidence makes it questionable.

5.01.4 Child Born in Maine and Verification of Citizenship Lost or Destroyed: When applicants cannot provide proof of citizenship for a child born in Maine, the application should be processed as usual and the Parent given a thirty (30) day Award Letter. The Parent must supply verification of citizenship within thirty (30) calendar days or the case will be closed.

5.01.5 Child Born Out-of-State and Verification of Citizenship Lost or Destroyed: When applicants cannot provide proof of citizenship for a child born out-of-state, the application should be processed as usual and the Parent given a ninety (90) day Award Letter. The Parent must supply verification of citizenship within ninety (90) calendar days or the case will be closed. Caseworkers should set a tickler as a reminder to follow up on the requirement. If verification is supplied, the worker should issue an Award Letter for the remaining nine months. If verification is not supplied and the parent can provide a copy of the original dated document requesting verification of citizenship and a copy of a second dated document following-up on the status of the request, an additional ninety (90) day Award Letter shall be granted.

5.01.6 The Jay Treaty of 1794 recognizes the aboriginal right of Native Americans to pass the border of the U.S. and Canada. When a Native American with Canadian citizenship moves to Maine, they are recognized as lawfully admitted for permanent residence.

5.01.7 U.S.born children of illegal immigrants shall not be denied services based upon the citizenship status of their Parent(s).

Work, Job Training or Educational Program

To be eligible for Child Care Subsidy, families must demonstrate a need for care. In general, that means that the Parent must be Employed or attending an Educational Program which prevents the Parent from providing care and supervision of the children in the household during the time the Parent is participating in the activity. If there are two (2) Parents in the home, both must be Employed or attending an Educational Program. See Rules 5.13.5

One of the following is required for each job to document work schedule:

4 weeks of current, consecutive pay stubs showing hours worked

Employment information sheet completed and signed by supervisor/Human Resources (enclosed), followed by submitting 4 weeks consecutive pay stubs as soon as available

If self-employed, submit your current federal income taxes (Form 1040 and all schedules)

For each student attach a current official class schedule showing name, class times, and semester dates.

Class schedules must be provided 30 days prior to semester beginning and previous semester grades will be required within 3 weeks of semester ending. On-line classes have special eligibility and may or may not be approved.

Income

5.13 Verification, Documentation and Treatment of Gross Family Income

5.13.1 The Parent shall have the primary responsibility to provide verification of Family income.

5.13.2 Income verification must be requested from all program applicants. Eligibility cannot be determined prior to income verification; and Child Care Subsidy services shall not be provided prior to verification.

5.13.3 Income verification must be documented in the computer data base.

5.13.4 If income verification has not been provided within ten (10) days of the application date, the application will be denied.

5.13.5 Acceptable verification of **earned income** includes one or more of the following:

- a. Four (4) weeks of current, consecutive and complete pay stubs
- b. Four (4) weeks of current, consecutive and complete pay envelopes
- c. W-2 Form (if representative of current and future earnings)
- d. State and/or Federal Income Tax Return
- e. Self-employment bookkeeping records
- f. Sales and expenditure records
- g. Statement of employment and expected gross earnings, signed and dated by the employer on company letterhead
- h. Employer's wage record
- i. Employment Security Office records
- j. Verbal verification from Caseworker for Care and Custody Department/Tribal referrals
- k. A signed release of information from the applicant

which authorizes the Department to pursue verification or further clarification

5.13.6 Documentary evidence is the primary source of verification of **unearned income**. Whenever attempts to verify income have failed for reasons other than Parent's non-cooperation, an amount to be used shall be determined based on the best available information. If verification (other than documentary evidence) is used, the reason why shall be explained in the Parent's record. Acceptable verification of **unearned income** includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Benefit check (viewed and photocopied by the Department)
- b. All types of Award Letters
- c. Signed income tax records (interest income, dividends, royalties, estates, trusts, deferred compensation plans, capital gains, etc.)
- d. Support and alimony payments evidenced by court order, divorce or separation papers, or check copies
- e. Social Security Query Card Response
- f. Social Security District Office verification
- g. Bank statement
- h. Maine Employment Security Commission verification
- i. Worker's Compensation verification
- j. Insurance company verification

k. Verbal verification from Caseworker for Care and Custody Department/Tribal referrals
l. A signed release of information from the applicant which authorizes the Department or the **contracted agency** to pursue verification or further clarification

5.13.7 The calculation of Gross Family Income is based on the Family's income and other circumstances expected to exist until the next eligibility period. The calculation is based on the Parent's and the Department's reasonable expectations and knowledge of current, past and future circumstances.

5.13.8 The calculation is determined by the following steps:

- a. Income received within four (4) or more weeks immediately preceding application or redetermination must be verified
- b. Determine, through a careful review of the income documentation and a discussion with the Parent, if there has been any Significant Income Changes during this period
- c. If there have been changes, and the changes are of a continuous nature, the changes must be taken into consideration when determining the calculation.

5.13.9 The calculation for **self-employment income** must be the average income over a twelve-month period when it represents the Family's major source of support.

- a. This applies even when it is received in a shorter period of time
- b. If the twelve-month average is not an accurate reflection of circumstances or a business has been in operation only a part of a year, income will be averaged for the months in operation or the Department may calculate the self-employment income based on anticipated earnings
- c. Seasonal self-employment income which supplements other income shall be averaged over the season
- d. Income from self-employment shall be calculated as follows:
 1. Add all gross self-employment income together including the full amount of capital gains. This means that a Family with more than one self-employment enterprise shall have all self-employment gross income added together
 2. Add all costs of producing income together
 3. **Costs not allowed** as costs of producing income are:
 - i. Payments on the principal of the purchase price of income producing real estate, capital assets, equipment, machinery or other durable goods;
 - ii. Net losses from previous periods;
 - iii. Depreciation expense Note: The employer's share of FICA tax is an allowable deduction
 4. Subtract the total costs of producing the income from the total gross income of the self-employment enterprise(s).
 5. Divide net earnings by number of months over which income has been averaged, when appropriate.
 6. Add self-employment income to any other income received by the household. Losses from a

	<p>farm enterprise shall be deducted from any other countable Family income. This special consideration applies only to farms with annual gross sales of \$1,000 or more. Otherwise, losses from self-employment shall not be subtracted from any other countable Family income.</p> <p>7. After the self-employment business has been in operation for one year, self-employed child care recipients must make at least the current state minimum wage for each hour of work performed, to be eligible for Child Care Subsidy.</p>
	<p>5.02 Maine Residency Requirement Child Care Subsidy applicants must be residents of the state of Maine. Proofs of residence must show the Parent's current physical address and match the residence listed on the application. Post Office Box addresses are not accepted as proof of Maine residency . Proof shall be established by producing documentation from the following list:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Current Maine driver's license showing a Maine residence address b. Maine utility bills with service at a Maine residence address c. Maine property tax bill or receipt indicating a Maine residence address d. Maine mortgage documents or homeowner Insurance documents for a Maine residence or proof of Maine home ownership with a Maine residence address e. Maine W-2 Form not more than eighteen (18) months old with the applicant's name and Maine residence address f. Current Maine individual income tax return indicating Maine Resident status g. Maine Voter's registration card with a Maine residence address h. Maine school enrollment form if applicant is under age 18 with the applicant's Maine residence address i. Residential rental and/or lease agreement with a Maine address j. Current Maine hunting/fishing license with a Maine residence address k. Proof of undergraduate Student in-state tuition payment l. Two (2) signed affidavits by two different individuals who can prove their Maine residency
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other. Describe:	
Maine Residency	

2.2.10. Which strategies, if any, will the Lead Agency use to assure the timeliness of eligibility determinations upon receipt of applications?

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Time limit for making eligibility determinations.
Describe length of time [30 Days from receipt of completed application.](#)

Track and monitor the eligibility determination process
 Other.

Describe

None

2.2.11. Are the policies, strategies or processes provided in questions 2.2.1 through 2.2.10 different for families receiving TANF? (658E(c)(2)(H) & (3)(D), §§98.16(g)(4), 98.33(b), 98.50(e))

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Yes.

If yes, describe:

No.

2.2.12. Informing parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirement.

The regulations at §98.33(b) require the Lead Agency to inform parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the work requirement for any single custodial parent who has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care for a child under 6 years of age. Lead Agencies must coordinate with TANF programs to ensure, pursuant that TANF families with young children will be informed of their right not to be sanctioned if they meet the criteria set forth by the State TANF agency in accordance with section 407(e)(2) of the Social Security Act. In fulfilling this requirement, the following criteria or definitions are applied by the TANF agency to determine whether the parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care. **NOTE:** The TANF agency, not the CCDF Lead Agency, is responsible for establishing the following criteria or definitions. These criteria or definitions are offered in this Plan as a matter of public record.

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a) Identify the TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions:

State/Territory TANF Agency [Office for Family Independence \(OFI\), Department of Health and Human Services](#)

b) Provide the following definitions established by the TANF agency.

- "appropriate child care": [Defined by the Office for Family Independence as a childcare provider that has passed a required background check by the ASPIRE-TANF program.](#)
- "reasonable distance": [Defined as not exceeding by ½ hour the normal commute time from the participant's dwelling to work or an approved activity](#)
- "unsuitability of informal child care": [Defined by the Office of Family Independence as a potential](#)

childcare provider that has a substantiated complaint(s) involving child abuse or neglect, or a background check with the State Bureau of Identification and/or the Department of Motor Vehicles that indicates convictions (e.g., Operating Under the Influence or criminal activity) that would justify the denial of the application to receive childcare payments from OFI.

• "affordable child care arrangements": Defined as the Child Care Market Rates that are determined every 2 years by the Office of Child and Family Services of the Department of Health and Human Services.

c) How are parents who receive TANF benefits informed about the exception to individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirements?

In writing

Verbally

Other.

Describe:

2.3. Eligibility Criteria for Child Care

In order to be eligible for services, children must (1) be under the age of 13, or under the age of 19 if the child is physically or mentally disabled or under court supervision; (2) reside with a family whose income is less than 85 percent of the State's median income for a family of the same size; and (3) reside with a parent or parents who is working or attending job training or an educational program; or (4) be receiving or needs to receive protective services. (658P(3), §98.20(a))

2.3.1. How does the Lead Agency define the following eligibility terms?

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residing with -

Residing with means the child is living with the applicant who is maintaining a home or main domicile for the child.

in loco parentis -

In loco parentis means any blood relative with custody (whether or not court ordered) or any person with court-ordered custody.

2.3.2. Eligibility Criteria Based Upon Age

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a) The Lead Agency serves children from 6 weeks to 12 years (may not equal or exceed age 13).

b) Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children age 13 and above but below age 19 years who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care? (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

Yes, and the upper age is [up to 19th birthday](#) (may not equal or exceed age 19). Provide the Lead Agency definition of *physical or mental incapacity* -

[Physical or Mental Incapacity means a condition that affects the ability of children to care for themselves. Children who have a physical or mental incapacity are physically or mentally incapable of caring for themselves. Physical or mental incapacity must be diagnosed by a qualified professional or be court determined.](#)

No.

c) Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children age 13 and above but below age 19 years who are under court supervision? (658P(3), 658E(c)(3)(B), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

Yes, and the upper age is (may not equal or exceed age 19).

No.

2.3.3. Eligibility Criteria Based Upon Work, Job Training or Educational Program

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) How does the Lead Agency define "working" for the purposes of eligibility? Provide a narrative description below, including allowable activities and if a minimum number of hours is required.

Reminder - Lead Agencies have the flexibility to include any work-related activities in its definition of working, including periods of job search and travel time. (§§98.16(f)(3), 98.20(b))
working-

[Employed means gainful work that produces earned incomes from wages, salaries, commissions, fees, tips, piece rate payments, or self-employment in one's own business, professional enterprise, partnership or farm.](#)

[4.08.3 For one job search within a 6 month period, the Department will pay for up to eight \(8\) weeks child care for current recipients who have lost work or who have completed school and are looking for work. This coverage starts at the time of the first day of unemployment. Parents must contact the](#)

Department and complete a Job Search Request Form and request job search time. The Parent shall be granted up to 20 hours a week of subsidized child care. This leave is separate time and is not counted against excused absence

b) Does the Lead Agency provide CCDF child care assistance to parents who are attending job training or an educational program? (§§98.16(g)(5), 98.20(b))

Yes.

If yes, how does the Lead Agency define "attending job training or educational program" for the purposes of eligibility? Provide a narrative description below.

Reminder - Lead Agencies have the flexibility to include any training or education-related activities in its definition of job training or education, including study time and travel time.

attending job training or educational program -

Attending a Job Training or Educational Program means a person is enrolled in and physically attending at least half time a job training or educational program.

No.

2.3.4. Eligibility Criteria Based Upon Receiving or Needing to Receive Protective Services

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) Does the Lead Agency provide child care to children in protective services? (§§98.16(f)(7), 98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A) & (B))

Yes.

If yes, how does the Lead Agency define "protective services" for the purposes of eligibility? Provide a narrative description below.

Reminder - Lead Agencies have the flexibility to define protective services beyond formal child welfare or foster care cases. Lead Agencies may elect to include homeless children and other vulnerable populations in the definition of protective services.

Note - If the Lead Agency elects to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care whose foster care parents are not working, or who are not in education/training activities for CCDF purposes these children are considered to be in protective services and should be included in this definition.

protective services

No.

b) Does the Lead Agency waive, on a case-by-case basis, the co-payment and income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services? (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3)(C)(ii), §98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A))

Yes.

No.

2.3.5. Income Eligibility Criteria

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) How does the Lead Agency define "income" for the purposes of eligibility? Provide the Lead Agency's definition of "income" for purposes of eligibility determination. (§§98.16(g)(5), 98.20(b))

income -

Income- Gross Family Income is the sum of all money, earned and unearned, already received or reasonably anticipated to be received by all family members during the service eligibility period. Income excluded from Gross Family Income is listed at Section 5.12 of current Rules.

b) Which of the following sources of income, if any, will the Lead Agency exclude or deduct from calculations of total family income for the purposes of eligibility determination? Check any income the Lead Agency chooses to exclude or deduct, if any.

Adoption subsidies

Foster care payments

Alimony received or paid

Child support received

Child support paid

Federal nutrition programs

Federal tax credits

State/Territory tax credits

Housing allotments, Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or energy assistance

Medical expenses or health insurance related expenses

Military housing or other allotment/bonuses

Scholarships, education loans, grants, income from work study

Social Security Income

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Veteran's benefits

Unemployment Insurance

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

- Worker Compensation
- Other types of income not listed above:

Special payments to Native Americans excluded by law, Bureau of Indian Affairs Student Assistance.

None

c) Whose income will be excluded, if any, for purposes of eligibility determination? Check anyone the Lead Agency chooses to exclude, if any.

- Children under age 18
- Children age 18 and over - still attending school
- Teen parents
- Unrelated members of household
- All members of household except for parents/legal guardians
- Other.

Describe:

5.12 Income Excluded from Gross Family Income

5.12.1 Certain income must be **excluded** from Gross Family Income as follows:

a. The actual amount of court-ordered child support payments made to another Family. The cannot include payments in arrears or other court-ordered payments

b. Energy Assistance Program payments or allowances made under any federal energy assistance program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Farmer's Home Administration (FmHA) until 1996 and reimbursements are considered federal energy assistance

c. Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) payments and JTPA on-the-job training income received by program participants (regardless of age) in the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program and comparable summer youth employment and training programs under Americorps. All other payments from JTPA's On-The-job Training Program count as income unless they are received by dependents less than 19 years old

d. Payments under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970

e. Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) vouchers

f. Special payments to Native Americans excluded by law, e.g., payments under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act

g. Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is excluded whether received as advanced pay

weekly wages or received

in one sum after filing annual income tax return. Note: State and local EITC is not excluded

h. Excluded educational assistance authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, including

1. Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (GEOG or PELL Grants) 2.

(Super PELL Grants)

3. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG)
4. State Student Incentives Grants (SSIG; Maine State Incentive Grant)
5. Federal Direct Student Loan Program (FDSLPL), formerly GSL and FFELP
6. Federal Direct Supplemental Loan Program (provides loans to Students)
7. Federal Direct PLUS Program (provides loans to Parents)
8. Federal Direct Stafford Loan Program
9. Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan Program
10. Federal Consolidated Loan Program
11. Federal Perkins Loan Program (direct loans to Students in institutions of higher education)

Loans, formerly

NDSL)

Education Act)

12. Federal Work Study Funds (Note: Not all Federal work study funds come under Title IV of the Higher Education Act)
13. TRIO Grants (go to organization or institutions for Students from disadvantaged backgrounds)
14. Upward Bound (some stipends go to Students)
15. Student Support Services
16. Robert E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program
17. Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program
18. College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) for Students whose families are engaged in seasonal farm

and seasonal farm

work

19. High School Equivalency Program (HEP)
20. National Early Intervention Scholarship and Partnership Program

i. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Student assistance, education or training assistance, and employment assistance programs.

Each Tribe has a BIA agency that may be contacted for more information about education and employment assistance. BIA

Student assistance is provided by the Tribes, is not denoted by any particular name, and is not listed on institutions'

financial aid statements

• j. Value of supplemental food assistance received under the Child Nutrition Act or the National School Lunch Act

• k. Value of USDA Food Supplement and/or Donated Commodities

l. Earned income of a Student 19 years of age or younger who is attending an elementary school or secondary school and

resides with the applicant. An elementary or secondary school Student is someone who attends elementary or secondary

school enough time for that person's state or local school district to consider the person a "Student." This includes a Student

who attends GED or home-school classes recognized, operated, or supervised by the Student's local school district.

The exclusion of this income shall not be altered by semester breaks, summer vacations, etc., if the Student resumes

enrollment after the break.

- m. When a Parenting Teen is the applicant, the income of the Teen's Parents, step-parents, other relatives or non-relatives who
 - provide a home for the Parenting Teen(s) shall be excluded. The Teen Parent must be attending elementary school, high school, or a GED program.
- n. Foster care payments from the Department of Health and Human Services or Federally Recognized Tribe.
- o. Nonrecurring lump sum payments such as income tax refunds; and the portion of retroactive, lump sum Social Security, SSI, railroad retirement or insurance settlements intended to cover a period prior to the current eligibility period.
- p. State or federal one-time assistance for weatherization or emergency repair or replacement of unsafe or inoperative heating or cooling device.
- q. All loans, including Student educational loans, bank loans, loans from private individuals, and other types of loans where there exists a written agreement with repayment terms as a condition of the loan.
- r. The value of non-cash benefits or gains from an employer, such as: shelter including military barracks housing, food and clothing provided by an employer. This exclusion shall not include money that is legally due the Family but diverted to pay for household expenses.
- s. The value of non-cash benefits such as: public subsidized housing, general assistance voucher payments, medical and dental services, donated commodities, and food.
- t. Certain vendor payments made on behalf of the applicant, including:
 1. Money payments by a non-Family member which are not legally due the household and are paid directly to a third party for a household's expense, such as a relative paying the rent or an employer paying the rent in lieu of wages;
 2. Vendor assistance from state or local programs which provide no cash assistance. This includes General Assistance vendor payments made to a third party.
- u. Monies withheld or returned from an assistance payment, earnings or other source to repay a program overpayment. Count the gross amount as income when the overpayment is the result of a violation as determined by TANF or other means-tested program.
- v. Child support payments received by TANF recipients that are turned over to the Department of Health and Human Services.
- w. Reimbursements and allowances which do not exceed the actual costs for job-related or training-related expenses, medical

expenses, or dependent care expenses. This includes allowances from ASPIRE.

x. Third-party payments received and used for the care of a third-party beneficiary who is not a Family member.

y. Withdrawals from bank deposits and credit union deposits.

z. Lump sum cash inheritances or gifts.

aa. The portion of loan or note repayments which is determined to be the loan principal (return of capital) in accordance with IRS regulations.

bb. Losses from a farming enterprise shall be deducted from any other countable household income. This special consideration applies only to farms with annual gross sales of \$1,000 or more.

cc. Certain cash donations, based on need, received from one or more private, nonprofit charitable organizations.

dd. Housing allotment for military families who have one or both Parents deployed to a foreign country.

None

d) Provide the CCDF income eligibility limits in the table below. **Complete** columns (a) and (b) based upon maximum eligibility initial entry into the CCDF program. Complete Columns (c) and (d) **ONLY IF** the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits lower than 85% of the SMI.

Reminder - Income limits must be provided in terms of State Median Income (SMI) (or Territory Median Income) even if federal poverty level is used in implementing the program. (§98.20(a)(2)). FY 2013 poverty guidelines are available at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.shtml>.

Family Size	(a) 100% of State Median Income (SMI)(\$/month)	(b) 85% of State Median Income (SMI)(\$/month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85]	IF APPLICABLE Income Level if lower than 85% SMI	
			(c) \$/month	(d) % of SMI [Divide (c) by (a), multiply by 100]
1	3086.92	2623.88	2396.00	78
2	4036.75	3431	3233.00	80
3	4986.58	4239	4069.00	82
4	5936.42	5046	4910.00	83
5	6886.25	5853	5746.00	83

e) Will the Lead Agency have "tiered eligibility" (i.e., a separate income limit at re-determination to remain eligible for the CCDF program)?

Yes.

If yes, provide the requested information from the table in 2.3.5d and **describe below:**

Note: This information can be included in the table below.

No.

Family Size	(a) 100% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month)	(b) 85% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month)[Multiply (a) by 0.85]	IF APPLICABLE Income Level if lower than 85% SMI	
			(c) \$/month	(d) % of SMI[Divide (c) by (a), multiply by 100]
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

f) SMI Year 2013 and SMI Source <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/03/15/2012-6220/state-median-income-estimates-for-a-four-person-household-notice-of-the-federal-fiscal-year-ff-2013>

g) These eligibility limits in column (c) became or will become effective on:
04/01/2013

2.3.6. Eligibility Re-determination

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Does the State/Territory follow OCC's 12 month re-determination recommendation? (See Program Instruction on Continuity of Care <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/im2011-06>)

Yes

No. If no, what is the re-determination period in place for most families?

6 months

24 months

Other.

Describe:

Length of eligibility varies by county or other jurisdiction.

Describe:

b) Does the Lead Agency coordinate or align re-determination periods with other programs?

Yes. If yes, **check programs that the Lead Agency aligns eligibility periods with and describe the redetermination period for each.**

Head Start and/or Early Head Start Programs.

Re-determination period:

Pre-kindergarten programs.

Re-determination period:

TANF.

Re-determination period: [Annual](#)

SNAP.

Re-determination period: [Annual](#)

Medicaid.

Re-determination period:

SCHIP.

SCHIP.

Re-determination period: [Annual](#)

Other.

Describe:

No.

c) Describe under what circumstances, if any, a family's eligibility would be reviewed prior to redetermination. For example, regularly scheduled interim assessments, or a requirement for families to report changes.

8.01 Reporting Requirements

8.01.1 Within ten (10) days of its occurrence, Parents receiving a Child Care Subsidy must report to the Department any of the following:

- a. Change in employment including changes in hours, wages, employer or loss of job
- b. Change in income that results in an increase of \$100 per month or greater
- c. Change in Family size
- d. Change of Child Care Provider

e. Change in the number of child care hours needed due to change in work schedule, school schedule or change in time required to travel to and from employment

8.01.2 Program and payment eligibility will be reviewed by the Department based on the information reported in Section 8.01.1. The Parent and the Child Care Provider will receive a new Award Letter if the subsidy payment and/or the Parent fee changes.

Six Month Reporting:

1.50 Six-Month Report means a report sent to clients from the Department to determine if there have been changes in eligibility. See 8.01.3.

8.01.3 In addition to the annual verified re-determination set forth in Section 8.02.1, the Department will review information about Family income, Family size, work hours or school hours every six (6) months. A Six-Month Report of the information currently being used for eligibility will be sent to Parents. Parents will make corrections on the report and return to the Department within thirty (30) days in order for their subsidy to be continued. The Department will update eligibility for clients when a change has occurred.

d) Describe any action(s) the State/Territory would take in response to any change in a family's eligibility circumstances prior to re-determination

When a family's eligibility circumstances change prior to re-determination, program and payment eligibility will be reviewed by the Department based on the information reported in Section 8.01.1. The Parent and the Child Care Provider will receive a new Award Letter if the subsidy payment and/or the Parent fee changes.

With respect to Parent fee, the Parent fee shall be determined at the time of application, at the time of the Six-Month Report and when the annual redetermination is conducted. The fee shall remain the same until the next Six-Month Report or the annual redetermination, unless an ongoing decrease in income occurs that is expected to last for at least two (2) or more months. The fee shall not be increased between redeterminations if the Family's income increases, except to correct an error in the prior calculation. Families shall be subject to the gross income limit for eligibility and shall report increases in income exceeding one hundred (\$100) dollars per month even if the change does not immediately affect the Parent fee

e) Describe how these policies are implemented in a family-friendly manner that promotes access and continuity of care for children. (See Information Memorandum on Continuity of Care for examples <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/im2011-06>).

- The Department will re-determine eligibility of all Parents receiving subsidy with verified documentation annually. Periodic spot checks for accuracy and eligibility will be done.
- When possible, re-determinations for subsidy will be aligned with Food Supplement or MaineCare re-determination when a subsidy recipient receives one of these programs.

The Department will send the Parent and Provider written notification at least thirty (30) days before the re-determination is due that they must reapply for subsidy services. The Child Care Provider will also be notified.

Interim child care may be provided for up to two (2) months for current recipients who have lost work or who have completed school and are looking for work. Parents, who contact the Department or the Contracted Slots Agency, complete a Job Search Request form and request job search time shall be granted:

- One job search per six (6) month period.
- Job search time is limited to 20 hours per week.

- The eligibility for Child Care Subsidy services will continue for up to twelve (12) weeks for a child of a Parent on maternity or paternity leave. The subsidy will be reinstated at the end of maternity leave when the parent returns to work and the child returns to child care.

- The eligibility for services will continue uninterrupted for a child of a Student during a normal summer vacation period (about 15 weeks) or a normal semester break (about 4 weeks) per year. Student must be enrolled for benefits to continue.

- Reasonable causes for child absence from the child care program include:
 - Federal/State holidays

 - Parental vacation days

 - Inclement weather defined by a snow day when local schools are closed

 - Illness of the child or other immediate Family member

 - Transportation problems that affect the Parent's ability to transport the child to care

 - Family emergencies, including but not limited to surgery, Catastrophic events affecting the Family, including but not limited to fires, storms or accidents.

- Reasonable causes for extended child absence from the program but for no more than two (2) consecutive weeks include:
- Parental vacations
- Parental visitations
- Illness of the child or Family member
- Catastrophic events affecting the Family, including but not limited to fires, storms or accidents.

f) Does the Lead Agency use a simplified process at re-determination?

Yes.

If yes, describe:

No.

2.3.7. Waiting Lists

Describe the Lead Agency's waiting list status. Select **ONE** of these options.

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Lead Agency currently does not have a waiting list and:

All eligible families *who apply* will be served under State/Territory eligibility rules

Not all eligible families *who apply* will be served under State/Territory eligibility rules

Lead Agency has an active waiting list for:

Any eligible family who applies when they cannot be served at the time of application

Only certain eligible families.

Describe those families:

Waiting lists are a county/local decision.

Describe:

Other.

Describe:

2.3.8. Appeal Process for Eligibility Determinations

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Describe the process for families to appeal eligibility determinations:

13.01 Any person who is denied service, has services reduced or terminated or is denied participation in the program by the Department has the right to a state agency hearing. The Commissioner has delegated to the Division of Administrative Hearings the responsibility to conduct state agency hearings. The state agency hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the current Administrative Procedure Act promulgated rules for state agency hearings.

13.02 Action on Requests for Service

The Department shall give written notice within thirty (30) calendar days of request for service to all persons who are denied services, using a form approved by the Department.

13.02.2 In all instances, notices of denial of service shall contain the Parent's or Provider's hearing rights.

13.02.3 The following actions shall not be subject to a state agency hearing on denial of service:

1. The service(s) requested are not within the Department's service or program description
2. Department funds are depleted
3. The request for service originates from a person who is not authorized or appointed to act on behalf of a Parent

13.02.4 If a request for services is denied, the person denied may submit another request at any time a change in circumstances occurs.

13.02.5 The Department shall retain copies of all notices of denial issued.

13.03 Action to Terminate or Reduce Services

13.03.1 In cases of proposed action to discontinue, terminate, suspend, or reduce services, the Department shall give written notice to the Parent(s) at least 12 calendar days prior to the effective date

of the action.

13.03.2 The written notice to discontinue, terminate, suspend or reduce services shall contain the following:

1. The date of the intended action
2. The action the Department is proposing to take
3. The reason(s) for the proposed action
4. Reference to the specific rules or regulations supporting such action
5. Explanation of the individual's right to request a conference and/or a state agency hearing
6. The time frame within which the conference and/or hearing request must be submitted in order for services to continue

13.03.3 The following actions to discontinue, terminate, suspend or reduce services shall **not** be subject to a state agency hearing:

1. Reduction, change or termination of service(s) resulting from state program changes which have been implemented through a rulemaking procedure, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act
2. Reduction or termination of service resulting from a change in an annual or other services plan of the Child Care and Development Fund program or other state program or policy when those decisions have provided for adequate public notice

13.03.4 The Department shall retain copies of all notices to discontinue terminate, suspend or reduce services in the Parent's files.

13.04 State Administrative Hearing

13.04.2 Parents who are receiving a Child Care Subsidy from the Department of Health and Human Services must request an Administrative Hearing within ten (10) calendar days of the Parent's receipt of notification.

13.04.3 Service shall be continued throughout the entire hearing process when the written request for a state Administrative Hearing is received within ten (10) calendar days of the Parent's receipt of notification and the hearing decision rules against the Department. In cases where the hearing decision rules in favor of the Department, the Department may seek recoupment for the subsidy provided from the time of the initial termination until final termination notice (provided after the hearing decision).

13.04.4 When a state Administrative Hearing request is received within the time frame stated above, the Department shall notify the Child Care Provider immediately of their responsibility to continue service until the state Administrative Hearing decision is rendered.

2.4. Sliding Fee Scale and Family Contribution

The statute and regulations require Lead Agencies to establish a sliding fee scale that varies based on income and the size of the family to be used in determining each family's contribution (i.e., co-payment) to the cost of child care (658E(c)(3)(B) §98.42).

2.4.1. Attach a copy of the sliding fee scale as Attachment 2.4.1. Will the attached sliding fee scale be used in all parts of the State/Territory?

Yes.

Effective Date: 04/01/2013

No. If no, attach other sliding fee scales and their effective date(s) as **Attachment 2.4.1a, 2.4.1b**, etc.

2.4.2. What income source and year will be used in creating the sliding fee scale? (658E(c)(3)(B)) Check only one option..

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

State Median Income,

Year: 2013

Federal Poverty Level,

Year: 2013

Income source and year varies by geographic region.

Describe income source and year:

Other.

Describe income source and year:

2.4.3. How will the family's contribution be calculated and to whom will it be applied? Check all that the Lead Agency has chosen to use. (§98.42(b))

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Fee as dollar amount and

Fee is per child with the same fee for each child

Fee is per child and discounted fee for two or more children

Fee is per child up to a maximum per family

No additional fee charged after certain number of children

Fee is per family

Fee as percent of income and

- Fee is per child with the same percentage applied for each child
- Fee is per child and discounted percentage applied for two or more children
- No additional percentage applied charged after certain number of children
- Fee per family
- Contribution schedule varies by geographic area.

Describe:

- Other.

Describe:

Co-payment is not to exceed 10% of the family gross income for all their children receiving CCDF.

If the Lead Agency checked more than one of the options above, describe:

2.4.4. Will the Lead Agency use other factors in addition to income and family size to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.42(b))

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Yes,
and describe those additional factors:

No.

2.4.5. The Lead Agency may waive contributions from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size. (§98.42(c)). Select ONE of these options.

Reminder - Lead Agencies are reminded that the co-payments may be waived for only two circumstances - for families at or below the poverty level or on a case-by-case basis for children falling under the definition of "protective services" (as defined in 2.3.4.a).

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

ALL families, including those with incomes at or below the poverty level for families of the same size, ARE required to pay a fee.

NO families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE required to pay a fee.

The poverty level used by the Lead Agency for a family of 3 is:

SOME families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee.

The Lead Agency waives the fee for the following families:

2.5. Prioritizing Services for Eligible Children and Families

At a minimum, CCDF requires Lead Agencies to give priority for child care assistance to children with special needs, or in families with very low incomes. Prioritization of CCDF assistance services is not limited to eligibility determination (i.e., establishment of a waiting list or ranking of eligible families in priority order to be served). Lead Agencies may fulfill priority requirements in other ways such as higher payment rates for providers caring for children with special needs or waiving co-payments for families with very low incomes (at or below the federal poverty level). (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.44)

2.5.1. How will the Lead Agency prioritize child care services to children with special needs or in families with very low incomes? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.44) Lead Agencies have the discretion to define *children with special needs* and *children in families with very low incomes*. Lead Agencies are not limited in defining *children with special needs* to only those children with physical or mental disabilities (e.g., with a formal Individual Education Plan (IEP) required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)). Lead Agencies could consider children in the child welfare system, children of teen parents, or homeless children as examples of *children with special needs*.

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

How will the Lead Agency prioritize CCDF services for:	Eligibility Priority (Check only one)	Is there a time limit on the eligibility priority or guarantee?	Other Priority Rules
---	--	--	-----------------------------

Children with special needs

Provide the Lead Agency definition of Children with Special Needs:

- Priority over other CCDF-eligible families
- Same priority as other CCDF-eligible families
- Guaranteed subsidy eligibility
- Other.

Describe:

Yes.

The time limit is:

No

Different eligibility thresholds.

Describe:

These families will be given priority if on a waitlist.

Higher rates for providers caring for children with special needs requiring additional care

Prioritizes quality funds for providers serving these children

Other.

Describe:

N/A

Special Needs Child means a child under the age of 13 with a specific diagnosis/disability which without intervention may impede or impair the attainment of developmental milestones. This includes:

- A child who experiences significant developmental delays or who has a diagnosed physical or mental condition which has a high probability of resulting in a significant developmental delay. Significant delay is a 25% delay in one or more areas of development or a six (6) month delay in two (2) or more areas.

Areas of development include: cognitive, speech/language, physical/motor, vision, hearing, psycho-social, and self-help skills.

Developmental delay is determined and documented by early intervention programs, special education programs, or other multi-disciplinary teams.

Documentation must be provided with the application for Child Care Subsidy

Children with Special Needs: Special Needs Child means a child under the age of 13 with a specific diagnosis/disability which without intervention may impede or impair the attainment of developmental milestones. This includes:

A child who experiences significant developmental delays or who has a diagnosed physical or mental condition which has a high probability of resulting in a significant developmental delay.

Significant delay is a 25% delay in one or more areas of development or a six (6) month delay in two (2) or more areas. Areas of development include: cognitive, speech/language, physical/motor, vision, hearing, psycho-social, and self-help skills.

Developmental delay is determined and documented by early intervention programs, special education programs, or other multi-disciplinary teams.

Documentation must be provided with the application for Child Care Subsidy

A child considered being at-risk for health or developmental problems as a result of established biological risk factors, and/or as a result of identified environmental risk factors including homelessness, and who is referred by a third party such as public health agencies, physicians, schools, government agencies, community social service agencies, homeless shelter, early intervention specialists, and/or Federally Recognized Tribes

A child between thirteen (13) years of age and eighteen (18) years of age, inclusive, who is physically or mentally incapable of caring for him

	or herself or is under court supervision, can also be provided subsidy, and A child who resides with a primary caregiver is defined as a legal immigrant or in refugee status		
<p>Children in families with very low incomes</p> <p>Provide the Lead Agency definition of Children in Families with Very Low Incomes:</p> <p>Children in Families with Very Low Incomes Very Low Income means Gross Family Income, adjusted to family size, does not exceed 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Priority over other CCDF-eligible families</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same priority as other CCDF-eligible families</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Guaranteed subsidy eligibility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other.</p> <p>Describe:</p> <p><i>Very Low Income</i> means Gross Family Income, adjusted to family size, does not exceed 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p>The time limit is:</p> <input type="text"/> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Different eligibility thresholds.</p> <p>Describe:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> <p>These families will be given priority if on a waitlist.</p> </div> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Waiving co-payments for families with incomes at or below the Federal Poverty Level</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other.</p> <p>Describe:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> <p>N/A</p> </div>

2.5.2. How will CCDF funds be used to provide child care assistance to meet the needs of families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), those attempting to transition off TANF through work activities, and those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF? (658E(c)(2)(H), Section 418(b)(2) of the Social Security Act, §§98.50(e), 98.16(g)(4)) **Reminder** - CCDF requires that not less than 70 percent of CCDF Mandatory and Matching funds be used to provide child care assistance for families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), those attempting to transition off TANF through work activities, and those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF.

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- Use priority rules to meet the needs of TANF families (describe in 2.5.1 or 2.5.3.)
- Waive fees (co-payments) for some or all TANF families who are below poverty level
- Coordinate with other entities (i.e. TANF office, other State/Territory agencies, and contractors)
- Other.
- Describe:

2.5.3. List and define any other eligibility conditions, priority rules and definitions that will be established by the Lead Agency. (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.16(g)(5), §98.20(b))
Reminder - Lead Agencies are reminded that any eligibility criteria and terms provided below must comply with the eligibility requirements of §98.20 and provided in section 2.2. Any priority rules provided must comply with the priority requirements of §98.44 and provided in section 2.4.1.

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Term(s) - Definition(s)

Describe:

None

2.6. Parental Choice In Relation to Certificates, Grants or Contracts

The parent(s) of each eligible child who receives or is offered financial assistance for child care services has the option of either enrolling such child with a provider that has a grant or contract for the provision of service or receiving a child care certificate.
(658E(c)(2)(A), §98.15(a))

2.6.1. Child Care Certificates

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) When is the child care certificate (also referred to as voucher or authorization) issued to parents? (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii), 658P(2), §98.2, §98.30(c)(4) & (e)(1) & (2))

- Before parent has selected a provider
- After parent has selected a provider
- Other.

Describe:

N/A

b) How does the Lead Agency inform parents that the child care certificate permits them to choose from a variety of child care categories, including child care centers, child care group homes, family child care homes, and in-home providers? (§98.30(e)(2))

- Certificate form provides information about choice of providers

- Certificate is not linked to a specific provider so parents can choose provider of choice
- Consumer education materials (flyers, forms, brochures)
- Referral to child care resource and referral agencies
- Verbal communication at the time of application
- Public Services Announcement
- Agency

Website:

- Community outreach meetings, workshops, other in person activities
- Multiple points of communication throughout the eligibility and renew process
- Other.

Describe:

N/A

c) What information is included on the child care certificate? **Attach a copy of the child care certificate as Attachment 2.6.1.** (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii))

- Authorized provider(s)
- Authorized payment rate(s)
- Authorized hours
- Co-payment amount
- Authorization period
- Other.

Describe:

N/A

d) What is the estimated proportion of services that will be available for child care services through certificates?

100% of services will be available through certificates.

2.6.2. Child Care Services Available through Grants or Contracts

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) In addition to offering certificates, does the Lead Agency provide child care services through grants or contracts for child care slots? (658A(b)(1), 658P(4), §§98.16(g)(1), 98.30(a)(1) & (b)). **Note:** Do not check "yes" if every provider is simply required to sign an agreement in order to be paid in the certificate program.

Yes.

If yes, **describe** the type(s) of child care services available through grants or contracts, the process for accessing grants or contracts, and the range of providers that will be available through grants or contracts:

No. If no, skip to 2.6.3

b) Will the Lead Agency use grants or contracts for child care services to achieve any of the following? Check the strategies, if any, that your State/Territory chooses to implement.

Increase the supply of specific types of care

Programs to serve children with special needs

Wrap-around or integrated child care in Head Start, Early Head Start, pre-k, summer or other programs

Programs to serve infant/toddler

School-age programs

Center-based providers

Family child care providers

Group-home providers

Programs that serve specific geographic areas

Urban

Rural

Other.

Describe:

Support programs in providing higher quality services

Support programs in providing comprehensive services

Serve underserved families.

Specify:

Other.

Describe:

c) Are child care services provided through grants or contracts offered throughout the State/Territory? (658E(a), §98.16(g)(3))

Yes.

No,

and **identify** the localities (political subdivisions) and services that are not offered:

d) How are payment rates for child care services provided through grants/contracts determined?

e) What is the estimated proportion of direct services that will be available for child care services through grants/contracts?

2.6.3. How will the Lead Agency inform parents and providers of policies and procedures for affording parents unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds? (658E(c)(2)(B), §98.31)) Check the strategies that will be implemented by your State/Territory.

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Signed declaration

Parent Application

Parent Orientation

Provider Agreement

Provider Orientation

Other.

Describe:

[Child Care Subsidy Policy Manual 10-148](#)

2.6.4. The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care (i.e., care provided in the child's own home) but may limit its use. (§§98.16(g)(2), 98.30(e)(1)(iv)) Will the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

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- No
- Yes. If checked, what limits will the Lead Agency set on the use of in-home care?
Check all limits the Lead Agency will establish.
- Restricted based on minimum number of children in the care of the provider to meet minimum wage law or Fair Labor Standards Act
- Restricted based on provider meeting a minimum age requirement
- Restricted based on hours of care (certain number of hours, non-traditional work hours)
- Restricted to care by relatives
- Restricted to care for children with special needs or medical condition
- Restricted to in-home providers that meet some basic health and safety requirements
- Other.
Describe:

An in-home provider can care for no more than two children funded with CCDF.

2.6.5. Describe how the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints about providers and makes substantiated parental complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C), §98.32)

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The Department's Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints. Any parent seeking child care may request information on whether a substantiated complaint has been made against a provider.

A description of parent's rights and responsibilities related to child care is available at <http://www.maine.gov/ocfs/ec/occhs/rights.htm>

2.7. Payment Rates for Child Care Services

The statute at 658E(c)(4) and the regulations at §98.43(b)(1) require the Lead Agency to establish adequate payment rates for child care services that ensure eligible children equal access to comparable care.

2.7.1. Attach a copy of your payment rates as Attachment 2.7.1. Will the attached payment rates be used in all parts of the State/Territory?

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Yes. Effective Date: [10/01/2013](#)

No. If no, attach other payment rates and their effective date(s) as **Attachment 2.7.1a, 2.7.1b, etc.**, etc.

2.7.2. Which strategies, if any, will the Lead Agency use to ensure the timeliness of payments?

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Policy on length of time for making payments.

Describe length of time: [10 State working days upon receipt of an accurately completed and signed billing form.](#)

Track and monitor the payment process

Other.

Describe:

None

2.7.3. Market Rate Survey

Lead Agencies must complete a local Market Rate Survey (MRS) no earlier than two years prior to the effective date of the Plan (no earlier than October 1, 2009). The MRS must be completed prior to the submission of the CCDF Plan (see Program Instruction CCDF-ACF-PI-2009-02 <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/pi-2009-02> for more information on the MRS deadline).

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) Provide the month and year when the local Market Rate Survey(s) was completed (§98.43(b)(2)): [04/2013](#)

b) Provide a summary of the results of the survey.

The summary should include a description of the sample population, data source, the type of methodology used, response rate, description of analyses, and key findings.

Survey Universe

[While some market rate surveys may rely on a sample of the population of child care providers in the state, Child Care Aware® of America and Maine DHHS surveyed every licensed provider in an attempt to collect their rates. A list of these providers was made available through the Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services, which is responsible for issuing Child Care Center Licenses, Family Child Care](#)

certificates, and Nursery School licenses. The list provided contained 1,951 unique providers including 577 center based providers, 1,261 family child care providers and 113 legal, unregulated providers (LUR).

Over the course of the survey, the universe of providers saw various reductions. “Head Start only” programs and other special needs programs that do not charge and/or follow a different rate structure which is not representative of the private market rate for child care were excluded from the analysis of market rates. Providers that had moved and were now unreachable or had closed their doors were also excluded from the survey. Of the 1,951 providers, 15 were excluded due to the fact that they represented a “Head Start only” program and 25 were returned as having closed bringing the new total to 1,911. In addition, LURs were not included in the analysis, bringing the total universe to 1,808.

Survey Description

All center and home participants were asked to provide current enrollment, licensed and desired capacity in one table followed by their full- and part-time rates across each of the age groups served at their location. Providers were asked to provide hourly, daily, weekly and monthly rates as applicable as well as their hours and days of operation. While there was some variation between the surveys for child care centers and family child care homes, the questions pertaining to hours of operation, rates charged and capacity information were identical.

Respondents were also asked about any accreditations they may have been working to obtain or have already earned. Providers were also asked to indicate whether they provide before and/or after school care, full and/or part time care as well as the number of hours per operating day (for full and part time rates) and number of days in a part-time operating week. Legal, unregulated providers were not asked to provide data on their capacity and enrollment or accreditation .

Each survey packet contained a cover letter, postage paid return envelope, an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) sheet and the appropriate survey as determined by the provider’s setting. The FAQ sheet sought to address questions providers were likely to pose. This sheet also included telephone and email contact information in case a question arose that was not answered on the sheet.

Survey Administration and Tracking

This survey was designed with an electronic, online component as well as a more traditional paper survey mailing. All surveys were labeled with the provider’s OCFS-issued resource ID number which was used to track responses, non-responders and excluded providers. Both the electronic and paper components of the survey were conducted in multiple waves with some overlap to allow providers to have adequate opportunity possible to participate. Postcards were sent to all 1,951 providers on November 21, 2012 to inform them that they would soon be receiving invitations to participate in the Market Rate Survey.

A total of 1,575 providers were sent an invitation on December 4, 2012 to participate in the online version of the survey (all providers for whom emails were provided). This email was opened by 463 (33.2 percent) of recipients and contained basic instructions about how to complete the survey. The invitation was followed up with an email containing the link to the survey as well as a unique username and password for each provider.

Two follow-up emails were sent to all providers who received the initial email invitation but had not yet submitted data to remind them that the online update was open and available to use. These messages were sent on December 10th, 2012 (to 1,427 providers) and December 13th, 2012 (to 1,324 providers) and were opened by 532 (38.3 percent) and 372 (29 percent), respectively.

Those who did not respond to the survey electronically (1,881) were sent survey packets via mail on

December 12, 2012. This included 543 child care center surveys, 1,225 family child care home surveys and 113 LUR surveys.

A second survey mailing similar to the first was sent on January 9, 2013 to providers who had not responded to the survey. This mailing went to 1,235 providers consisting of 340 child care centers, 802 family child care homes and 93 LUR providers.

Finally, on February 12, 2013, telephone calls were made to non-responders in counties where the response rate was below 60 percent and to providers who had sent in surveys containing invalid data. This was done to ensure that each county was properly represented in the final analysis and to boost the quality of the data. Additionally, we reached out to all Legal, Unregulated providers by telephone to try and collect their data.

Due to requests from multiple providers, electronic data collection was reopened and select email invitations resent on March 11, 2013 with a submission deadline of March 15, 2013 after which data received was not included in the survey.

Response Rates

As mentioned previously, 1,951 providers across the state were sent surveys, either electronically or via regular mail. The only providers who were not sent a paper survey were those who completed the survey online prior to the first mailing. We received and processed a total of 1,115 valid unique surveys for a total response rate of 58.3 percent. The response rate among centers far exceeded the response rate among homes, however, slightly more than half of family child care home providers responded to the survey compared to nearly three-quarters of center-based providers.

After accounting for 15 centers that do not offer child care beyond Head Start programming and 10 centers which had closed their doors, we were left with a universe of 552 centers. Of these centers, 389 returned unique surveys for a response rate of 70.5 percent. Our total universe of family child care homes was reduced to 1,254 upon factoring in the seven homes which had closed their doors. Of these, we received 691 unique responses, giving us a response rate of 55.2 percent. LUR providers proved difficult to reach. Our initial universe of 113 LUR providers was reduced to 105 after adjusting for the eight who no longer offered care. Despite several efforts at reaching them with written mailed surveys as well as phone calls to every LUR provider, we were only able to obtain data for 35 of these providers for a response rate of 33 percent. We reached 100 percent of included LUR providers in Cumberland County.

Data Validity

As a whole, the data collected in this survey is sound and representative of the distribution of the availability and cost of care across the state. The percentage of statewide responders within each county is roughly proportional to the percentage of the statewide population residing within each county

Key Findings

The market rate survey shows that nearly two-thirds of licensed child care programs in Maine are operated out of family child care homes. Given the primarily rural nature of the state, this is not surprising. Child care fees are high compared to income for both centers and homes, particularly for single parent families with children.

One reason for higher rates in this survey compared to the 2010 report could be related to the economy, as a decline in programs could result in higher average rates. Another possible cause is Maine's trend toward higher quality care. Maine has a relatively large share of programs with accreditation, far outstripping the national average rates for both centers (8 percent) and homes (less than 1 percent) with

nearly one-third of Maine's programs responding to the survey reporting that they hold an accreditation of some type. In addition, another 8.3 percent of programs that are not accredited reported currently working toward accreditation. This is great news for the families who can access those programs. Given the research that shows the link between quality child care and school readiness (as well as greater school performance), the growing trend toward accreditation means more Maine children will start school ready to succeed.

2.7.4. Describe the payment rate ceilings in relation to the current MRS using the tables below.

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2.7.4a - Highest Rate Area (Centers)	(a) Monthly Payment Rate at the 75th percentile from the most recent MRS	(b) Monthly Maximum Payment Rate Ceiling	(c) Percentile if lower than 75th percentile of most recent survey
Full-Time Licensed Center Infants (11 months)	\$1,121.47	\$974.25	50%
Full-Time Licensed Center Preschool (59 months)	\$952.60	\$809.71	50%
Full-Time Licensed Center School-Age (84 months)	\$649.50	\$562.90	50%

2.7.4b - Lowest Rate Area (Centers)	(a) Monthly Payment Rate at the 75th percentile from the most recent MRS	(b) Monthly Maximum Payment Rate Ceiling	(c) Percentile if lower than 75th percentile of most recent survey
Full-Time Licensed Center Infants (11 months)	Somerset County \$562.90	\$562.90	50%
Full-Time Licensed Center Preschool (59 months)	Somerset County \$591.08	\$591.08	50%
Full-Time Licensed Center School-Age (84 months)	Somerset County \$281.45	\$281.45	50%

2.7.4c - Highest Rate Area (FCC)	(a) Monthly Payment Rate at the 75th percentile from the most recent MRS	(b) Monthly Maximum Payment Rate Ceiling	(c) Percentile if lower than 75th percentile of most recent survey
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Full-Time Licensed FCC Infants (11 months)	Cumberland County \$833.52	\$692.80	50%
Full-Time Licensed FCC Preschool (59 months)	Cumberland County \$714.45	\$649.50	50%
Full-Time Licensed FCC School-Age (84 months)	Cumberland County \$606.20	\$497.95	50%

2.7.4d - Lowest Rate Area (FCC)	(a) Monthly Payment Rate at the 75th percentile from the most recent MRS	(b) Monthly Maximum Payment Rate Ceiling	(c) Percentile if lower than 75th percentile of most recent survey
Full-Time Licensed FCC Infants (11 months)	Aroostook County \$433.00	\$411.35	50%
Full-Time Licensed FCC Preschool (59 months)	Aroostook County \$411.35	\$389.70	50%
Full-Time Licensed FCC School-Age (84 months)	Aroostook County \$411.35	\$368.05	50%

2.7.5. How are payment rate ceilings for license-exempt providers set?

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a) Describe how license-exempt center payment rates are set:

N/A

b) Describe how license-exempt family child care home payment rates are set:

N/A

c) Describe how license-exempt group family child care home payment rates are set:

N/A

d) Describe how in-home care payment rates are set:

The LUR Rate is 70% of the Family Child Care Rate.

2.7.6. Will the Lead Agency provide any type of tiered reimbursement or differential rates on top of its base reimbursement rates for providing care for children receiving CCDF subsidies? Check which types of tiered reimbursement, if any, the Lead Agency has chosen to implement. In the description of any tiered rates or add-ons, indicate the process and basis used for determining the tiered rates and amount and also indicate if the rates were set based on the MRS or another process.

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Differential rate for nontraditional hours.

Describe:

Differential rate for children with special needs as defined by the State/Territory.

Describe:

Differential rate for infants and toddlers.

Describe:

Differential rate for school-age programs.

Describe:

Differential rate for higher quality as defined by the State/Territory.

Describe:

The State of Maine will pay a quality differential to a licensed provider enrolled in Quality for ME, Maine Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) at a Step 2, 3 or 4. The quality stipend for children enrolled in a child care center or home that has a Step 4 Certificate will be calculated by applying an adjustment factor of 1.10

The quality stipend for children enrolled in a child care center or home that has a Step 3 Certificate will be calculated by applying an adjustment factor of 1.05 for one year after receiving the Step 3 certificate. The quality stipend for children enrolled in a child care center or home that has a Step 2 Certificate will be calculated by applying an adjustment factor of 1.02 or one year after receiving the Step 2 certificate.

Other differential rate.

Describe:

None.

Reminder - CCDF regulations require the Lead Agency to certify that the payment rates for the provision of child care services are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible families to child care services comparable to those provided to families not eligible to receive CCDF assistance. In the next three questions, Lead Agencies are asked to describe how their payment policies reflect the affordable copayments for families provision of equal access (i.e., minimizing additional fees to parents), how payment practices are implemented consistent with the general child care market to be fair to providers (see Information Memorandum on Continuity of Care for examples <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/im2011-06>), and the summary of facts describing how payment rates are adequate to ensure equal access to the full range of providers.

2.7.7. What policies does the Lead Agency have regarding any additional fees that providers may charge CCDF parents? The Lead Agency...

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Allows providers to charge the difference between the maximum reimbursement rate and their private pay rate

Pays for provider fees (e.g., registration, meals, supplies).

Describe:

Policies vary across region, counties and or geographic areas.

Describe:

Other.

Describe:

7.07 Special Child Care Provider Fees

7.07.1 If a Child Care Provider has a policy of requiring a one-time deposit, registration fee, application fee for all Parents, the Parent will be responsible for these fees.

7.07.2 Special activity fees are the responsibility of the Parent. If the Parent elects not to pay, then the Child Care Provider will be responsible for providing alternative child care for children who do not participate in the activity.

7.07.3 Transportation fees, late pickup fees and other fees of this nature will be the responsibility of the Parent.

2.7.8 What specific policies and practices does the Lead Agency have regarding the following:

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a) Number of absent days allowed. Describe

9.05 Reasonable Causes for Child Absence

9.05.1 Reasonable causes for child absence from the child care program include:

- a. Federal/State holidays
- b. Parental vacation days
- c. Inclement weather defined by a snow day when local schools are closed
- d. Illness of the child or other immediate Family member
- e. Transportation problems that affect the Parent's ability to transport the child to care
- f. Family emergencies, including but not limited to surgery, Catastrophic events affecting the Family, including but not limited to fires, storms or accidents.

9.05.2 Reasonable causes for extended child absence from the program but for no more than two (2) consecutive weeks include:

- a. Parental vacations
- b. Parental visitations
- c. Illness of the child or Family member
- d. Catastrophic events affecting the Family, including but not limited to fires, storms or accidents.

9.05.3 When a child is absent from the program beyond two (2) consecutive weeks for the same reasonable causes, the provider must obtain prior written approval from the Department to extend enrollment for a specified period of time.

b) Paying based on enrollment. Describe

In the State of Maine, payment is based on attendance at an approved Child Care Subsidy provider. The Department will reimburse providers for Child Care Services based on the number of hours the Parent qualifies for subsidy and the number of hours the child is in care.

c) Paying on the same schedule that providers charge private pay families (e.g., hourly, weekly, monthly). Describe

Child Care Providers will bill the Department on a biweekly basis as agreed upon by the Department and the Child Care Provider. The billing period will be stipulated in the Provider Agreement.

d) Using electronic tools(automated billing, direct deposit, EBT cards, etc.) to make provider payments. Describe

Direct Deposit.

2.7.9. Describe how payment rates are adequate to ensure equal access to the full range of providers based on the Market Rate Survey.

CCDF regulations require the Lead Agency to certify that the payment rates for the provision of child care services are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible families to child care services comparable to those provided to families not eligible to receive CCDF assistance. To demonstrate equal access, the Lead Agency shall provide at a minimum a summary of facts describing: (§98.43(a))

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a) How a choice of the full range of providers, e.g., child care centers, family child care homes, group child care homes and in-home care, is made available (§98.43(a)(1)):

The child care subsidy website defines that a parent may choose from all licensed child care providers enrolled in, Quality for ME, as well as legal unlicensed providers who have passed background checks (all adults in household) and meet certain health and safety requirements. The DHHS Child Care Resource and Referral Specialist and the DHHS Child Care Subsidy program inform parents that they have a choice of providers when they apply for child care subsidy.

b) How payment rates are adequate based on the most recent local MRS (§98.43(a)(2)):

Rates for licensed child care centers and regulated family child care homes are set at the 50th percentile of what the market charges as demonstrated by the most recent market rate study. Rates for unregulated providers are set at 70% of the regulated family child care homes as a sufficient number of unregulated providers, did not respond to our 2013 market rate survey. Rates for unregulated providers remain stable at 70% of the regulated family child care rates in October 2010 and parents who choose unregulated care are able to find a provider at this rate.

c) How family co-payments based on a sliding fee scale are affordable (§98.43(a)(3)):

All eligible parents will be assess a sliding fee based on family size and gross family income. The parent fee does not vary with the number of children in care, the amount of care they need, or the type of care they choose to use. A graduated fee percentage of gross family income will be applied to each of the income ranges as follows:

Poverty Guideline Range

Fee Percentage of Gross Family Income

Up to 25 %	2%
26%-50%	4%
51%-75%	5%
76%-100%	6%
101%-125%	8%
126%-150%	9%
151%-200%	10%
201%-250%	10%

The total amount of Parent fees assessed to a family cannot exceed ten percent of the family's gross income for all of their children enrolled in the subsidy program.

The fee shall be allocated to the youngest child first or in a manner that will allocate a portion of the fee across multiple children. If the fee exceeds the approved cost for a child, the remaining amount shall be allocated to the next oldest child until the full parent share has been allocated.

d) Any additional facts the Lead Agency considered to determine that its payment rates ensure equal access, including how the quality of child care providers is taken into account when setting rates and whether any other methodologies (e.g., cost estimation models) are used in setting payment rates

None

2.8 Goals for the next Biennium - In this section, Lead Agencies are asked to identify at least one goal for the upcoming biennium and are encouraged to identify no more than five priority goals total. ACF will target technical assistance efforts to help Lead Agencies achieve their goal(s). Lead Agencies may include existing goals (e.g., already identified in a State strategic plan or established by the Governor for a Lead Agency). Lead Agencies will report progress and updates on these goals in the annual Quality Performance Report (Appendix 1), including any barriers encountered.

What are the Lead Agency's goals for the administration of the CCDF subsidy program in the coming Biennium? For example, what progress does the State/Territory expect to make on continuing improved services to parents and providers, continuity of care for children, improving outreach to parents and providers, building or expanding information technology systems, or revising rate setting policies or practices).

Note -When identifying your goals below, Lead Agencies are encouraged to begin with an action verb reflecting the desired result over the two year period (e.g., Increase, Improve, Build, Align, Implement, Review, Revise, Streamline, Expand, etc.)

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Goal #1:

The State of Maine will create a framework to analyze higher rates for providers caring for children with special needs requiring additional care.

Goal #2:

The State of Maine will create Standard Operating Procedures for monitoring all Child Care Subsidy providers to increase our program integrity measures.

Goal #3:

The State of Maine will develop business requirements for an online Child Care Subsidy Application.

Goal #4:

The State of Maine will develop an updated Emergency Preparedness Plan for Child Care.